

IN THE CLAIMS

The following is a listing of the claims with amendments, which are presented in accordance with revised 37 C.F.R. §1.121.

Claims 1-67 (Canceled)

68. (Currently amended) A computer implemented method for managing a project using a processing system, the method comprising:

establishing a database in the processing system, the processing system maintained by a project management entity;

providing funding approval associated with the project, the funding approval being effected in association with a document collection associated with the project, the document collection maintained in the database, the document collection including a plurality of documents;

accessing the document collection in the database by a vendor; the vendor entering and submitting electronically information related to the project; and the vendor determining that funding approval for the project has been secured through access to the document collection; and

each of the plurality of documents being associated with a respective notebook, each notebook including associated categories, for each notebook the categories provided including:
a comment category that includes general notes;
a status category that includes a status of the project; and
a published notes category, the method including publishing notes in the published notes category to a team working on the project; and

wherein each of the plurality of documents is associated with an object, and the method further including maintaining a state of the object, the state of the object controlling whether documents associated with the object are modifiable.

69. (Previously presented) The method of claim 68, further including transferring monetary funds to the vendor after a predetermined event has occurred.

70. (Previously presented) The method of claim 69, wherein the predetermined event is the completion of a portion of the project associated with the vendor.

71. (Previously presented) The method of claim 70, wherein upon completion of the portion of the project associated with the vendor, the vendor submits an invoice via the system.

72. (Previously presented) The method of claim 71, wherein the invoice is electronically transmitted from a vendor workstation.

73. (Previously presented) The method of claim 71, wherein subsequent to submission of the invoice by the vendor, a payment associated with the invoice goes through a validation process and is charged against portions of a contract associated with the project.

74. (Previously presented) The method of claim 68, wherein accessing the document collection in the database by the vendor is controlled by access rights, which include a password.

75. (Previously presented) The method of claim 68, wherein the project is a construction project.

76. (Previously presented) The method of claim 68, wherein the vendor determining that approval for the project has been secured through access to the document collection is effected by the vendor reviewing an electronic copy of a purchase order.

77. (Previously presented) The method of claim 76, wherein the vendor accesses payment confirmations via the processing system.

78. (Previously presented) The method of claim 76, wherein the purchase order is issued to the vendor electronically.

79. (Previously presented) The method of claim 78, wherein the purchase order is issued to the vendor electronically, with a notification being made to a project manager.

80. (Previously presented) The method of claim 68, wherein the method further includes providing a contract to the vendor, the contract defining tasks to be performed by the vendor, the contract included in the document collection.

81. (Previously presented) The method of claim 80, wherein the contract further provides for the issuance of change orders by a project manager.

82. (Currently amended) A computer implemented method for managing a project using a processing system, the method comprising:

establishing a database in the processing system, the processing system maintained by a project management entity;

providing funding approval associated with the project, the funding approval being effected in association with a document collection associated with the project, the document collection maintained in the database, the document collection including a plurality of documents;

accessing the document collection in the database by a vendor;

the vendor entering and submitting electronically information related to the project; and

the vendor determining that funding approval for the project has been secured through access to the document collection; and

each of the plurality of documents being associated with a respective notebook, each notebook including associated categories, for each notebook the categories including:

a comment category that includes general notes;
a status category that includes a status of the project; and
a published notes category, the method including publishing notes in the
published notes category to a team working on the project; and
The method of claim 68, wherein the processing system provides a list of all
projects associated with a particular user, each of the projects associated with a document
collection.

83. (Currently amended) The method of ~~claim 68~~claim 82, further including
obtaining an invoice from each vendor once the respective vendor's portion of the project is
completed.

84. (Currently amended) The method of ~~claim 82~~claim 68, wherein the project is
assigned a project number, which is associated with the document collection.

85. (Currently amended) The method of ~~claim 82~~claim 68, wherein the funding
approval is part of a Request for Assistance initiated by a client.

86. (Currently amended) The method of ~~claim 82~~claim 68, wherein the funding
approval is processed in the processing system by an approval process.

87. (Currently amended) The method of claim 86, wherein the approval process
includes the processing system handling approval by a series of approvers.

88. (Currently amended) The method of claim 87, wherein an approver returns the
funding approval to a previous approver, the previous approver not being the requestor.

89. (Currently amended) The method of claim 88, wherein the approver returns the
funding approval to the requestor, as well as the previous approver.

90. (Currently amended) The method of claim 82~~claim 68~~, wherein the method further includes soliciting work from the vendors using the processing system.

91. (Currently amended) The method of claim 82~~claim 68~~, wherein the vendor communicates with the processing system using a workstation over a network.

92. (Previously presented) The method of claim 68, wherein the processing system provides for accessing a listing of Request for Assistance associated with a particular business unit.

93. (Previously presented) The method of claim 68, wherein the processing system provides for a user to access all funding documents for projects on which the user is involved.

94. (Previously presented) The method of claim 68, wherein a review entity provides an evaluation of an offer extended by a vendor.

95. (Previously presented) The method of claim 94, wherein the review entity is a project manager and the offer extended by a vendor is a bid.

96. (Previously presented) The method of claim 68, wherein the funding approval is effected by a client hierarchy.

97. (Previously presented) The method of claim 68, wherein the vendor is a construction entity.

98. (Canceled)

99. (Canceled)

100. (Canceled)

101. (Currently amended) A computer implemented method for managing a project using a processing system, the method comprising:

establishing a database in the processing system, the processing system maintained by a project management entity;

providing funding approval associated with the project, the funding approval being effected in association with a document collection associated with the project, the document collection maintained in the database, the document collection including a plurality of documents, the funding approval including:

identifying entities that comprise an approval hierarchy; and

automatically forwarding a notice requesting approval of at least one electronic document, in the document collection, to a successive one of the entities upon approval of the at least one electronic document by a previous entity in the approval hierarchy; and

accessing the document collection in the database by a vendor;

the vendor entering and submitting electronically information related to the project; and

the vendor determining that approval for the project has been secured through access to the document collection; and

each of the plurality of documents being associated with a respective notebook, each notebook including associated categories, for each notebook the categories provided including:

a comment category that includes general notes;

a status category that includes a status of the project; and

a published notes category, the method including publishing notes in the published notes category to a team working on the project.

102. (Canceled)

103. (Currently amended) A computer implemented method for managing a project using a processing system, the method comprising:

establishing a database in the processing system, the processing system maintained by a project management entity;

providing funding approval associated with the project, the funding approval being effected in association with a document collection associated with the project, the document collection maintained in the database, the document collection including a plurality of documents;

accessing the document collection in the database by a vendor; the vendor entering and submitting electronically information related to the project; and the vendor determining that funding approval for the project has been secured through access to the document collection;

further including transferring monetary funds to the vendor after a predetermined event has occurred;

wherein the predetermined event is the completion of a portion of the project associated with the vendor;

wherein accessing the document collection in the database by the vendor is controlled by access rights, which include a password

wherein the project is a construction project;

wherein the method further includes providing a contract to the vendor, the contract defining tasks to be performed by the vendor, the contract included in the document collection;

wherein the approval process includes the processing system handling approval by a series of approvers; and

wherein a review entity provides an evaluation of an offer extended by a vendor; and each of the plurality of documents is associated with an object, and

the method further including maintaining a state of a plurality of objects that are respectively associated with documents in the document collection, the state of each object controlling whether documents associated with a particular object are modifiable; and

the method further including maintaining a history of revisions to the objects, such that changes in state of the object during the approval process is maintained for auditing purposes.

104. (Currently amended) A computer implemented method for managing a project using a processing system, the method comprising:

establishing a database in the processing system, the processing system maintained by a project management entity;

providing funding approval associated with the project, the funding approval being effected in association with a document collection associated with the project, the document collection maintained in the database, the document collection including a plurality of documents;

accessing the document collection in the database by a vendor;
the vendor entering and submitting electronically information related to the project;
the vendor determining that funding approval for the project has been secured through access to the document collection; and

transferring monetary funds to the vendor after a predetermined event has occurred;
wherein the predetermined event is the completion of a portion of the project associated with the vendor, and upon completion of the portion of the project associated with the vendor, the vendor submits an invoice via the system, wherein the invoice is electronically transmitted from a vendor workstation;

wherein subsequent to submission of the invoice by the vendor, a payment associated with the invoice goes through a validation process and is charged against portions of a contract associated with the project;

wherein the method further includes providing a contract to the vendor, the contract defining tasks to be performed by the vendor, the contract included in the document collection;

wherein the processing system provides a list of all projects associated with a particular user, each of the projects associated with a document collection;

the method further including obtaining an invoice from each vendor once the respective vendor's portion of the project is completed;

wherein the funding approval is being processed in the processing system by an approval process, the approval process includes the processing system handling approval by a series of approvers, and wherein an approver returns the funding approval to a previous approver, the previous approver not being the requestor, the approver returns the funding approval to the requestor, as well as the previous approver and

each of the plurality of documents being associated with a respective notebook, each notebook including associated categories, for each notebook the categories provided including:

a comment category that includes general notes;

a status category that includes a status of the project; and

a published notes category, the method including publishing notes in the published notes category to a team working on the project; and

each of the plurality of documents is associated with an object, and the method further including maintaining a state of the object, the state of the object controlling whether documents associated with the object are modifiable, the at least one object being a bid; and

the object is associated with multiple documents of the plurality of documents; and
the method including providing a table to contain the state of the object, along with a
plurality of other objects associated with other documents.

105. (New) The method of claim 68, further including organizing the document collection into a variety of tree structures for viewing, one of the tree structures displaying all the documents that a user has approved within a predetermined period of time.

106. (New) The method of claim 68, at least one object being a bid.

107. (New) The method of claim 68, wherein the object is associated with multiple documents of the plurality of documents.

108. (New) The method of claim 107, including providing a table to contain the state of the object, along with a plurality of other objects associated with other documents.

109. (New) The method of claim 103, the method including:
associating each of the plurality of documents with a respective notebook, each notebook including associated categories, for each notebook the categories provided including:
a comment category that includes general notes;
a status category that includes a status of the project; and
a published notes category, the method including publishing notes in the published notes category to a team working on the project.

110. (New) A computer implemented method for managing a project using a processing system, the method comprising:

establishing a database in the processing system, the processing system maintained by a project management entity;

providing an approval associated with the project, the approval being effected in association with a document collection associated with the project, the document collection maintained in the database, the document collection including a plurality of documents; accessing the document collection in the database by a participant in the project; the participant entering and submitting electronically information related to the project; and

the participant receiving information through access to the document collection; and each of the plurality of documents being associated with a respective notebook, each notebook including associated categories, for each notebook the categories provided including:

- a comment category that includes general notes;
- a status category that includes a status of the project; and
- a published notes category, the method including publishing notes in the published notes category to a team working on the project; and

wherein each of the plurality of documents is associated with an object, and the method further including maintaining a state of the object, the state of the object controlling whether documents associated with the object are modifiable.

111. (New) The method of claim 110, the project being a contract and document collection including contract documents.